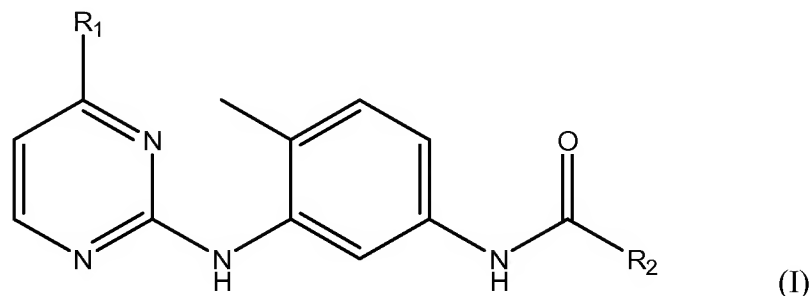


Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A compound of the formula (I)



wherein

R₁ is an unsubstituted phenyl radical and lower alkoxy-substituted phenyl, wherein the lower alkoxy substituent is at the position meta or para to the bond to the pyrimidine ring, or a heteroaryl radical selected from a thiazolyl, pyrazinyl, pyrimidinyl or 6-substituted-3-pyridyl radical; and

R₂ is a phenyl radical that is substituted in at least the 3-position by fluorine, halo-lower alkyl, halo-lower alkoxy, or halo-lower alkylthio;

or an N-oxide or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula I wherein R₁ is selected from a phenyl radical, a thiazolyl radical, a pyrazinyl radical, a pyrimidinyl radical or a 6-substituted-3-pyridyl radical.

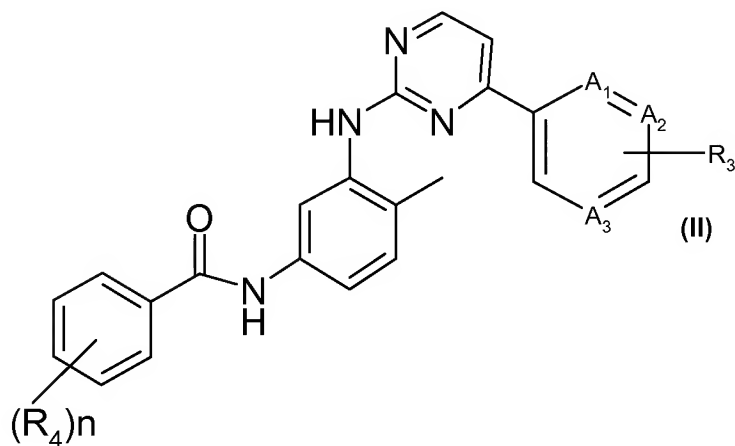
3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 1 wherein R₁ is a phenyl, 2-thiazolyl, 2-pyrazinyl, 5-pyrimidinyl or 6-substituted-3-pyridyl radical.

6. (Original) A compound of claim 5 wherein R₂ is phenyl that is substituted in at least the 3-position by fluorine, halo-lower alkyl, halo-lower alkoxy, or halo-lower alkylthio.

7. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 1 of formula II



wherein

n is 0, 1 or 2;

A₁, A₂ and A₃ are CH, or A₁ and A₂ are CH and A₃ is N, or A₁ and A₃ are N and A₂ is CH, or A₁ is CH and A₂ and A₃ are N;

R₃ is -NR₅R₆, halogen, -O-R₈, -S-R₈, or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by halogen, hydroxy, lower alkoxy, -NR₇R₈, or a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon;

R₄ is amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino, wherein the alkyl groups are unsubstituted or substituted by halogen or lower alkoxy; halogen, lower alkyl, halo-lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo-lower alkoxy, hydroxy, lower alkanoyl, carbamoyl, N-mono- or N,N-di-substituted carbamoyl, mercapto, lower alkylthio or halo-lower alkylthio;

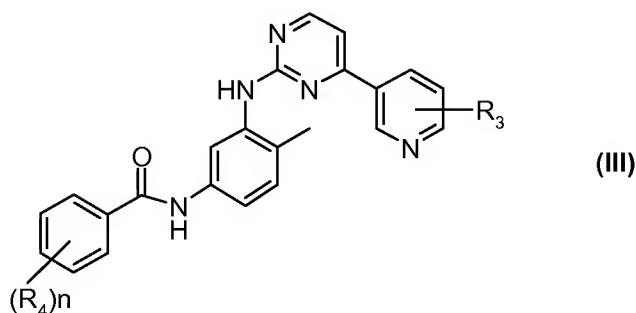
R₅, R₆, R₇ and R₈ are independently hydrogen, a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon, lower alkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl-lower alkylene, lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy, a heteroaryl radical, a heterocyclic radical, amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl amino or R₅ and R₆ or R₇ and R₈ together with the nitrogen form a heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical;

R₈ is a heterocyclic radical, a heteroaromatic radical, heteroaryl-lower-alkylene, heterocyclic-lower-alkylene, lower alkyl or lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy or -NR₇R₈;

or an N-oxide or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 7 wherein R_{[[2]]4} is ~~phenyl that is substituted~~ in at least the 3-position and is represented by halogen, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino; lower alkyl; halo-lower alkyl; lower alkoxy; halo-lower alkoxy; lower alkylthio; or halo-lower alkylthio.

9. (Original) A compound of claim 1 of formula (III)



wherein

n is 0, 1 or 2;

R₃ is -NR₅R₆, halogen, -O-R₈, -S-R₈, or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by halogen, hydroxy, lower alkoxy, -NR₇R₈, or a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon;

R₄ is amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino, wherein the alkyl groups are unsubstituted or substituted by halogen or lower alkoxy; halogen, lower alkyl, halo-lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo-lower alkoxy, hydroxy, lower alkanoyl, carbamoyl, N-mono- or N,N-di-substituted carbamoyl, mercapto, lower alkylthio or halo-lower alkylthio;

R₅, R₆, R₇ and R₈ are independently hydrogen, a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon, lower alkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl-lower alkylene, lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy, a heteroaryl radical, a heterocyclic radical, amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl amino or R₅ and R₆ or R₇ and R₈ together with the nitrogen form a

heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical;

R₈ is a heterocyclic radical, a heteroaromatic radical, heteroaryl-lower-alkylene, heterocyclic-lower-alkylene, lower alkyl or lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy or -NR₇R₈;

or an N-oxide or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10. (Original) A compound of claim 9 wherein R₄ is halogen, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino; lower alkyl; halo-lower alkyl; lower alkoxy; halo-lower alkoxy; lower alkylthio; or halo-lower alkylthio.

11. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 10 wherein R₄ is [[phenyl]] halo-lower alkyl, halo-lower alkoxy or halo-lower alkylthio.

12. (Original) A compound of claim 9 wherein R₄ is trifluoromethyl.

13. (Original) A compound of claim 9 wherein R₃ is -NR₅R₆ and one of R₅ and R₆ is lower alkyl substituted by -NR₇R₈ and R₇ and R₈ together with the nitrogen form a heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical.

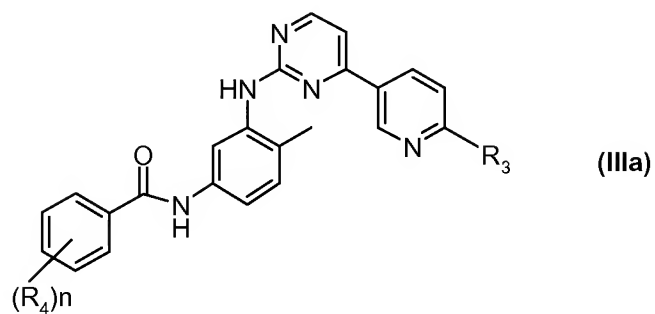
14. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 13 wherein the heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical is selected from morphilino, thiomorphilino, piperazinyl, piperidinyl, and 6-substituted-3-pyridyl.

15. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 9 wherein -NR₅R₆ is a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical.

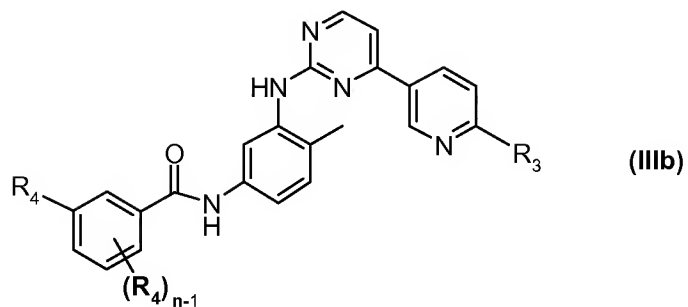
16. (Original) A compound of claim 15 wherein -NR₅R₆ is a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical selected from piperazinyl, 4-methylpiperazinyl, piperidinyl, 4-hydroxypiperidinyl, morphilino and thiomorphilino.

17. (Original) A compound of claim 9 wherein R₈ is lower alkyl, lower alkyl substituted by hydroxy or lower alkoxy, or a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical.

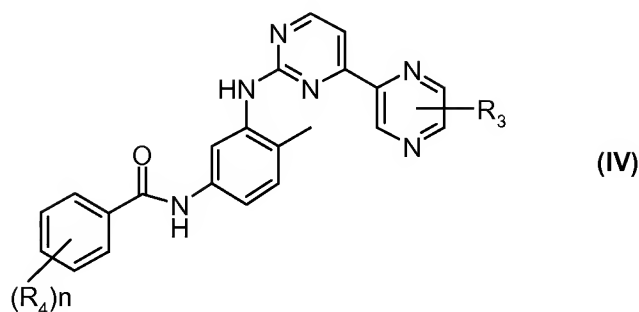
18. (Original) A compound of claim 9 of formula (IIIa)



19. (Original) A compound of claim 9 of formula IIIb



20. (Original) A compound of claim 7 of formula IV



wherein

n is 0, 1 or 2;

R_3 is hydrogen, $-NR_5R_6$, halogen, $-O-R_8$, $-S-R_8$, or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by halogen, hydroxy, lower alkoxy, $-NR_7R_8$, or a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon;

R_4 is amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino, wherein the alkyl groups are unsubstituted or substituted by halogen or lower alkoxy; halogen, lower alkyl, halo-lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo-lower alkoxy, hydroxy, lower alkanoyl, carbamoyl, N-mono- or N,N-di-substituted carbamoyl, mercapto, lower alkylthio or halo-lower alkylthio;

R_5 , R_6 , R_7 and R_8 are independently hydrogen, a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon, lower alkyl, C_3 - C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3 - C_8 cycloalkyl-lower alkylene, lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy, a heteroaryl radical, a heterocyclic radical, amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl amino or R_5 and R_6 or R_7 and R_8 together with the nitrogen form a heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical;

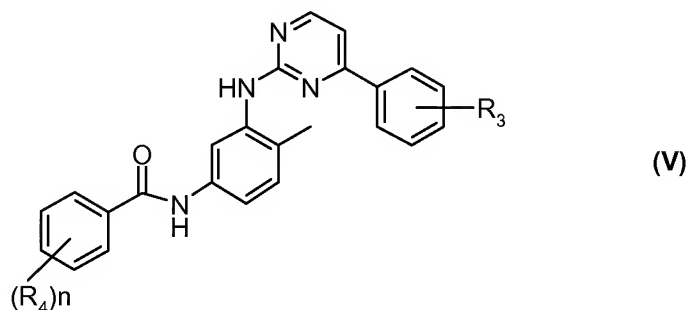
R_8 is a heterocyclic radical, a heteroaromatic radical, heteroaryl-lower-alkylene, heterocyclic-lower-alkylene, lower alkyl or lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy or $-NR_7R_8$;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

21. (Original) A compound of claim 20 wherein R_4 is halogen, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino; lower alkyl; halo-lower alkyl; lower alkoxy; halo-lower alkoxy; lower alkylthio; or halo-lower alkylthio.

22. (Original) A compound of claim 21 wherein at least one R₄ substituent is in the meta position relative to the carbonyl.

23. (Currently Amended) A compound of claim 7 of the formula (V)



wherein

n is 0, 1 or 2;

R₃ is ~~NR₅R₆, halogen, O-R₈, S-R₈, or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by halogen, hydroxyl, lower alkoxy, -NR₇R₈, or a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon;~~

R₄ is amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino, wherein the alkyl groups are unsubstituted or substituted by halogen or lower alkoxy; halogen, lower alkyl, halo-lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo-lower alkoxy, hydroxy, lower alkanoyl, carbamoyl, N-mono- or N,N-di-substituted carbamoyl, mercapto, lower alkylthio or halo-lower alkylthio;

R₅, R₆, R₇ and R₈ are independently hydrogen, a heteroaryl or heterocyclic radical attached at a ring carbon, lower alkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl-lower alkylene, lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy, a heteroaryl radical, a heterocyclic radical, amino, mono- or di-lower alkyl amino or R₅ and R₆ or R₇ and R₈ together with the nitrogen form a heteroaromatic or heterocyclic radical;

R₈ is a heterocyclic radical, a heteroaromatic radical, heteroaryl-lower-alkylene, heterocyclic-lower-alkylene, lower alkyl or lower alkyl which is substituted by hydroxy, lower alkoxy or -NR₇R₈;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

24. (Original) A compound of claim 23 wherein R₄ is halogen, mono- or di-lower alkyl-substituted amino; lower alkyl; halo-lower alkyl; lower alkoxy; halo-lower alkoxy; lower alkylthio; or halo-lower alkylthio.

25. (Original) A compound of claim 24 wherein at least one R₄ substituent is in the meta position relative to the carbonyl.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (I) according to claim 1.

27. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (II) according to claim 7.

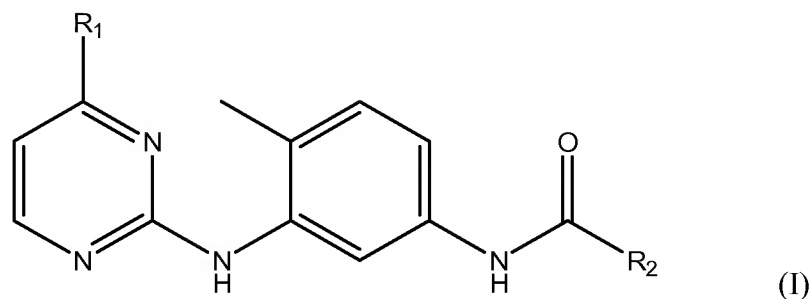
28. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (III) according to claim 9.

[[28]]29. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (IIIb) according to claim 19.

[[29]]30. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (IV) according to claim 20.

[[30]]31. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a patient having a disease characterized by excessive signaling through the MAP kinase signaling pathway wherein the disease is melanoma, which comprises administering to the patient an effective RAF kinase inhibiting amount of a compound of formula (V) according to claim 23.

[[31]]32. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula (I),



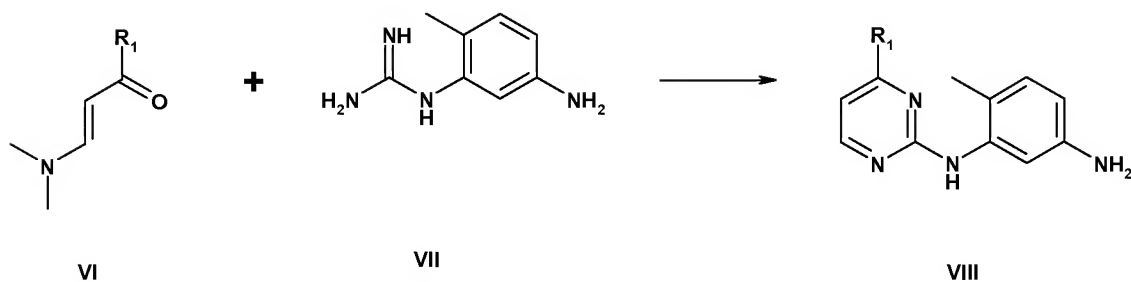
wherein

R₁ is a phenyl radical or a heteroaryl radical; and

R₂ is a phenyl radical;

or an N-oxide or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof;

which process comprises preparing a compound of formula VIII by reacting a compound of formula VI with a compound of formula VII according to the following scheme



[[32]]33. (Cancelled)

[[33]]34. (Cancelled)

[[34]]35. (Cancelled)